

Contour Architecture Ltd

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Why use a Chartered Architect?

A client centred service, value for money, freedom from worry and imagination are just some of the reasons why using a chartered architect makes sense.

Architects Act 1997

Before a person can be called an architect he or she will have completed a minimum seven-year course in the design, specification and erection of buildings and passed the professional practice examination which is the final stage of the training.

This permits entry to the list of UK Architects held by the Architects' Registration Board (ARB), and use of the title 'architect'. Thereafter, application can be made to the chartered professional body, Royal Institute of British Architects which entitles members to use the term 'chartered architect' and the initials RIBA.

A chartered architect is obliged to uphold the reputation of the architectural profession and fellow professionals; to carry out work on behalf of clients honourably, independently and efficiently; and to declare any interest which might conflict with the status of an independent consultant architect. In this way members of the public can be confident that in appointing an architect, they are securing the services of a genuine professional.

The use of the title 'architect' is protected actively under the Architects' Act 1997 by ARB. If you are in any doubt whether your advisor is a qualified architect and registered with the ARB, please contact them on +44 (0) 20 7580 5861, email: info@arb.org.uk.

The RIBA produce a document titled "A Client's Guide to Engaging an Architect" which provides detailed advice to members of the public.

A client centred service

Architects can provide a service that extends well beyond producing a set of drawings. Adept at identifying the needs and aspirations of their clients, identifying opportunities and problem solving, architects will bring their special skills, knowledge and experience to a project.

Added Value

Not only can architects provide value for money, but professional attention to detail will achieve value through the most efficient use of space, and careful selection of materials and finishes. Environmental sensitivity, energy efficiency, low running and maintenance costs can bring extra benefits to your project.

Freedom from worry

Architects can guide you through the complex procedures of planning permission and building regulations and monitor the builder's programme of works through to completion. RIBA members are obliged to carry professional indemnity insurance, providing you with further peace of mind.

Imagination

An architect can lift your project out of the ordinary. Anyone can alter a building but it takes an architect to do it with flair, imagination and style.

Undertaking a building project, whatever its scale, can be a daunting experience, but the same basic criteria apply, be it a simple house extension or a large office development. When you use a chartered architect you are employing someone who has undertaken at least seven years' architectural training, the longest in the building industry. Anyone styling themselves

'building consultant', 'architectural designer', 'plan drawer' and so on is unlikely to be an architect and does not have comparable skill or knowledge.

This leaflet aims to help potential clients understand the design process and to explain the different stages and costs involved. So before you begin, here is a guide to what lies ahead...

Communication

It is important that you and your chartered architect communicate with one another throughout the duration of the appointment. You should keep your chartered architect informed about any matters affecting the brief, the budget and site acquisition. Similarly, your chartered architect should keep you informed on such matters as progress and costs and will usually do so by means of regular reports throughout the design and construction stages. Both you and your chartered architect should be careful to commit yourselves to do only what lies within your skill, power and authority. For example, a chartered architect cannot guarantee to obtain planning permission, but can, and normally does, make the appropriate application.

Architect / Client Relationship

The most successful projects are those which proceed in an atmosphere of understanding and mutual trust. Both you and your chartered architect must reach an understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. The foundation of that understanding is contained in the RIBA appointment documents which are available from the RIBA Bookshop along with the guidance and related documents.

The RIBA recommends that, when the client is an organisation or company, a single person should be appointed with authority to make decisions.

The Agreement

At the outset of an appointment all chartered architects must agree in writing the terms of their appointment, the services to be provided and their fees. The standard conditions and model documents are designed to assist in recording agreement.

The Construction Design & Management (CDM) regulations came into effect on 31 March 1995 (last update 2015) and place a number of legal obligations on the client with regard to health and safety.

Your chartered architect can advise you further, if necessary.

Budget for the project

Construction cost and overall budget for the project are not the same. The overall budget will include all professional and legal fees and expenses, the statutory charges for applications for planning consent and building regulations, a contingent sum for unforeseen events and other costs such as furniture, equipment, land acquisition, finance charges and VAT, in addition to the construction costs.

Fee options available

Architects' fees can be calculated in three ways: percentage basis; on a lump-sum basis; or time charged by agreement. Expenses may be included within the agreed fee or charged

separately.

1. Percentage Basis

In this method, an architect's fees are expressed as a percentage of the total construction cost, i.e. the cost as certified by the architect of the works, including site works, executed under a building contract. Before fees can be estimated, client and architect need to establish the services to be provided, the approximate construction budget and the nature of the work.

2. Lump Sum

Lump sums are best used where the scope of the work can be clearly defined from the outset. It is necessary to define the parameters of services - i.e. time, project size and cost - where applicable, so that if these are varied more than a stated amount, the lump sum itself may be varied.

3. Time-charged Basis

This basis is best used where the scope of work cannot be reasonably foreseen or where services cannot be related to the amount of construction. It may be wise to set an upper limit on fees to be incurred, perhaps on a staged basis. Records of time spent on services will be made available to clients on reasonable request.

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Initial Discussion / Meeting with potential Architect / Designer

Is your Architect / designer registered with ARB?

This is a requirement if the title 'Architect' is being used. If you are meeting someone from an Architect's Practice, there must be a registered Architect employed at the practice.

To check the register please visit <http://architects-register.org.uk/>

Prior to the meeting you might consider:

- Before you meet with your Architect for the first time, it's worth spending some time writing down what you want to achieve.

For example, you might want an Architect's advice, you might only want them to apply for planning permission, you might want them to obtain quotes for the building work or you might want them to manage every part of the project for you from start to finish.

- Have these notes with you so that you can look over them during the meeting. It is important to give your Architect as much information as possible so that they have a clear understanding of what it is you want.
- After the meeting you should make sure that the Architect provides you with written confirmation of what it is they will do and how much it will cost, before they are instructed to undertake any work.

Your Architect will want to know:

What do you want to achieve?

(For example: single storey extension / loft conversion / new house)

What do you want your Architect to do?

(For example: initial concept design / planning application / building regulations application / manage the procurement of builders / manage the build stage)

What is your budget?

(This should include cost of the works, VAT, all professional fees, Statutory fees – eg planning application fee, contingency sum)

Do you have any time constraints?

You will want to know the following:

What does your Architect advise? Are your proposals achievable?

What is the Architect's fee and how is it calculated – percentage fee, hourly rate or lump sum?

Who will be the point of contact that you will deal with?

Who will be doing the work? Is there a checking procedure?

How will you communicate – email / letter / telephone?

Is there any information that the Architect requires from you prior to starting work?

What form will the appointment with the Architect take? What level of insurance cover is there?